

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Purpose

The Shandon Community Plan establishes a vision for the future that will guide development over the next 25 years. The vision described in this Plan reflects the wants, needs and opinions of people in and around Shandon. This Plan contains policies, programs, standards and guidelines to help achieve that vision and implement the goals and principles of the County's General Plan.

The Community Plan seeks to balance the needs of the growing population with preservation of natural resources and agricultural uses, while allowing sufficient flexibility to accommodate changing economic conditions.

The Shandon Community Plan serves as a bridge between countywide goals in the San Luis Obispo County General Plan and the specific needs of the community. Based on Shandon's physical, demographic and economic characteristics, the Community Plan serves as the basis for land use decisions and other related actions. For implementation, the Plan relies on tools such as the San Luis Obispo County Land Use Ordinance, land division regulations, capital improvement plans, and a variety of special purpose ordinances and programs. Development requiring County approvals such as land divisions and land use permits must be consistent with the Shandon Community Plan and its standards.

1.2 Setting

The unincorporated community of Shandon is home to approximately 1,200 residents (2012) and is located in central California about 18 miles east of Paso Robles. The community lies at the confluence of Cholame Creek and San Juan Creek where they form the Estrella River. Just north of the community is State Route 46 (SR 46), which is a regional east-west connector that links Highway 101 to Interstate 5. The community is set against the Temblor Range to the east, the Cholame Hills to the north, and agricultural lands to the south and west. (See Figure 1.1, Regional Map).

Shandon Urban Area

The town of Shandon is located in the northern portion of the Shandon-Carrizo Planning Area. It is primarily a rural farming community surrounded by various agricultural lands. Since the original settlement in 1890, Shandon has grown to be a focal point for surrounding farms and a social service center for people in the area. The planning for the original townsite of Shandon was done by the West Coast Land Company after its successful operation in Templeton. However, Shandon has remained a small community with predominantly agricultural and service businesses for local people.

Study Area

The County Board of Supervisors approved a Study Area, as recommended by the Shandon Advisory Council, of approximately 2,081 acres. Centre Street bisects the Study Area in an east-west direction and acts as the primary circulation route through the community. Figure 1.2, Study Area Map, shows the Study Area boundary, the Urban Reserve Line (URL) as configured in 2012 and the URL to be adopted with this Plan.

The Shandon Community Plan generally applies to the area within the adopted URL. However, there is one area of proposed land uses and various proposed public facility improvements that are located outside of the URL, but that are addressed in this Plan because of their essential connection to planning for Shandon. Those areas and improvements include the Commercial Service area northwest of the town near the intersection of West Centre Street and Highway 46,

the wastewater treatment facility site, and other public facility improvements such as access improvements at Highway 46 and West Centre Street and a water tank near the east end of the town. The precise zoning or land use category for the northwest Commercial Service area is shown on the Official Maps for the rural Shandon-Carrizo area. The official development standards for that area are found in the community planning standards for the rural portion of the Shandon-Carrizo Area Plan in the Land Use Ordinance.

1.3 Plan Structure and Organization

The Plan's Structure

A community plan is both a policy document and an implementation document. Accordingly, this Plan includes a vision statement and policies that are the basis for the implementing tools, which are programs, standards and guidelines. Policies are statements that expand on and implement the goals in the County General Plan. Policies, in turn, are implemented by programs, standards and guidelines.

Programs are recommended actions, rather than mandatory requirements. A program may be initiated by the County or other agency or group. Since many recommended programs involve making public expenditures or securing other funds, their initiation will depend on the availability of funding.

Standards are requirements that must be complied with and included in the design of development projects as applicable. Standards assure consistency throughout the community or within a particular land use category or combining designation.

Guidelines are recommended development features or techniques that help achieve a desired effect through alternatives to precise or fixed standards.

Policies and programs are located at the end of each chapter of this Plan and guidelines are contained in Chapter 9. Standards are found in Article 9 of the Land Use Ordinance, Title 22 of the County Code.

The Plan's Organization is as follows:

Executive Summary

Chapter 1 (Introduction) describes the purpose of the Shandon Community Plan, setting, plan structure and organization, vision, community plan goals and principles, community participation, and authority.

Chapter 2 (Population and Economy) provides details regarding the population, economic policies and programs, and economic development for the community.

Chapter 3 (Land Use and Neighborhood Design) describes land use policies and programs for land uses such as residential, commercial, industrial, recreational, institutional, agricultural and creek and habitat areas. It also includes a vision for the Centre Street commercial corridor. This chapter also addresses land uses in specified Master Plan Areas.

Chapter 4 (Natural and Cultural Resources and Conservation) outlines policies and programs that deal with biological resources, Sensitive Resource Areas, water resources, cultural and historical resources, and energy conservation.

Chapter 5 (Transportation and Circulation) describes the circulation pattern throughout the community for all modes of transportation, including vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle. This chapter establishes transportation and circulation policies and programs. It includes street classifications and street sections; public street improvements; traffic control and calming; bicycle, pedestrian and recreational trail facilities; and public transit.

Chapter 6 (Public Facilities and Services) describes the key services and facilities needed to serve the community, including schools, parks, fire protection, law enforcement, a library, a health clinic, and solid waste disposal.

Chapter 7 (Infrastructure and Utilities) discusses the major infrastructure and utilities needed to serve the community. This chapter addresses the water system, wastewater, storm water, flood management, and utilities.

Chapter 8 (Public Facilities Financing Plan) identifies the tentative costs and specifies financing methods for the major public facilities needed to support the community. The major public facilities include a wastewater treatment plant, improvements to the water system, and a number of circulation improvements such as improvements at SR 46 and improved access across the San Juan Creek.

Chapter 9 (Implementation) describes how the Community Plan is administered and how its policies will be implemented. The chapter also includes development guidelines, a table that identifies where and when mitigation measures from the Environmental Impact Report are applicable, and a consolidated implementation program table.

Figure 1.1
Regional Map

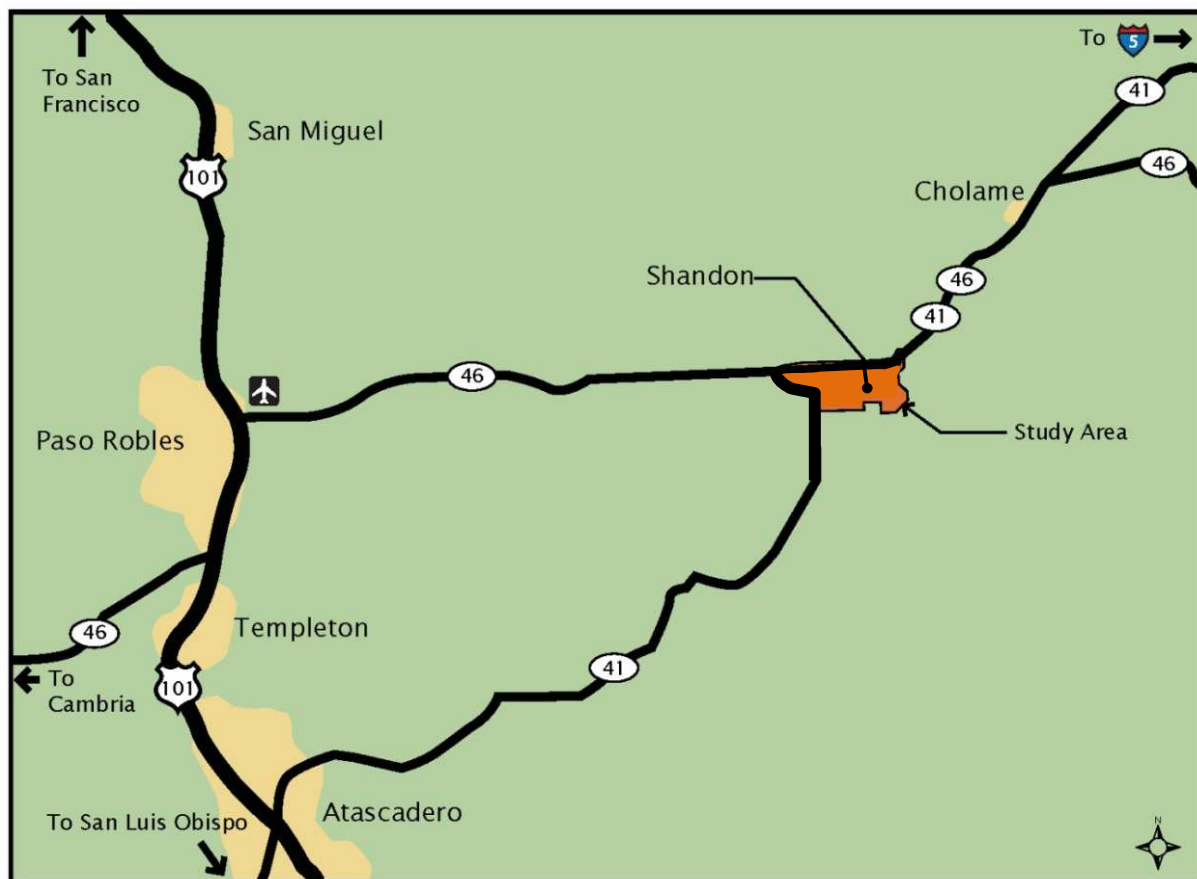
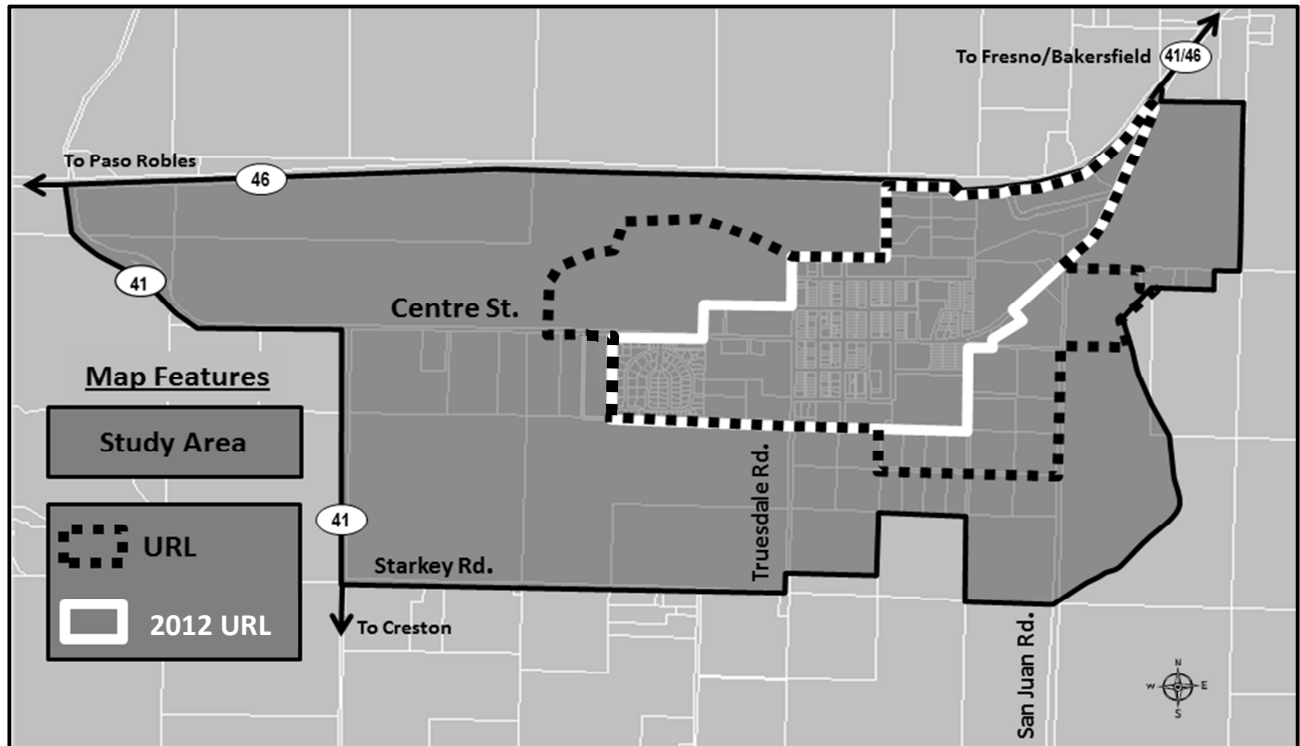


Figure 1.2
Study Area Map



1.4 Vision

The Community Plan reflects the community's preferences for promoting balanced growth that provides new opportunities to meet the needs of Shandon's residents. At the same time, it embraces common-sense approaches to achieve a sustainable community. Close-knit neighborhoods should interconnect to encourage walking and bicycling from residential areas to small commercial areas and a rejuvenated downtown. Residents should have opportunities to live and work in Shandon. The town should remain compact in form without encroaching onto nearby farmland, flood prone areas and hillsides.

The Community Plan serves as a guide for directing and coordinating planning decisions and physical changes within the community of Shandon. This Plan also defines the desired character and quality of development and directs the process for how development should proceed. The policies, programs, and guidelines in this Community Plan, and the standards found in Article 9 of the Land Use Ordinance define the manner in which Shandon's priorities and vision will be achieved.

Shandon In 2036

Shandon has become the eastern gateway to San Luis Obispo County. It is here where visitors stop to sample local agricultural products or rest on their journey between the Central Valley and the Central Coast. They experience a small-town atmosphere that is fused with the conveniences of urban living. Residents enjoy many opportunities to shop locally, work within the community, and walk to and from their neighborhood park, schools, and shopping center through inviting neighborhoods lined with trees. New businesses have been established along Centre Street and several older homes have been converted to a "live-work" setting. A network of sidewalks and landscaped trails connect the community's public spaces together, creating a walkable community with a sense of place. Through well-planned commercial development, Shandon is emerging with a prosperous economic and employment base.

1.5 San Luis Obispo County General Plan Goals and Principles

This Plan is part of and consistent with the San Luis Obispo County General Plan. The County of San Luis Obispo's General Plan outlines a number of goals, principles, objectives and policies designed to guide the physical, economic and environmental growth of the County. The following is an overview of the key policies and Strategic Growth Principles (SGP) from the General Plan that provide the starting point for the Shandon Community Plan.

Environment and Agriculture

1. SGP - Preserve open space, scenic natural beauty and sensitive environmental areas. Conserve energy resources. Conserve agricultural resources and protect agricultural land.
2. Agriculture Element Policy 11 - Maintain water resources for production of agriculture.
3. Agriculture Element Policy 24 - Discourage the conversion of agricultural lands to non-agricultural uses.
4. Conservation and Open Space Element, Biological Resources Policy 1.1: Protect sensitive biological resources such as wetlands and wildlife movement corridors.

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5. Conservation and Open Space Element, Energy Policy 2.3 - Promote water conservation for all water users in the county to reduce the amount of energy used to pump and treat water and wastewater at public water and wastewater treatment and distribution facilities.
6. Conservation and Open Space Element, Water Resources Policy 1.12 - Accurately assess and mitigate the impacts of new development on water supply.
7. Conservation and Open Space Element, Water Resources Policy 1.14- Avoid net increase in water use.

Population and Growth

8. Conservation and Open Space Element, Air Quality Policy 1.1 - Encourage compact land development by concentrating new growth within existing communities and ensuring complete services to meet local needs.
9. SGP - Strengthen and direct development towards existing and strategically planned communities.
10. Conservation and Open Space Element, Open Space Policy 1.7 - Protect open space resources by guiding development away from rural areas to more suitable areas.
11. Economic Element Policy 1a - Pursue economic development activities that will benefit the economy while maintaining the quality of life.
12. Safety Element, Water Hazards Policy S-8 - Strictly enforce flood hazard regulations both current and revised.
13. Safety Element, Fire Safety Policy S-13 - New development should be carefully located, with special attention given to fuel management in higher fire risk areas.

Land Uses and Community Design

14. SGP - Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place.
15. SGP - Encourage mixed land uses.
16. SGP - Create a range of housing opportunities and choices.
17. SGP - Take advantage of compact building design.
18. Conservation and Open Space Element, Visual Resources Policy 6.1 - Ensure that new multi-family residential, mixed-use, and commercial or other non-residential development in the urban and village areas is consistent with local character, identity, and sense of place.
19. Housing Element Policy 1.1- Designate a sufficient supply of land for housing that will facilitate balanced communities, including a variety of housing types, tenure, price, and neighborhood character.
20. Parks and Recreation Element Policy 2.1 - Provide parks which are aesthetic and consistent with community needs.

Circulation

- 21. SGP - Create walkable neighborhoods and towns.
- 22. SGP - Provide a variety of transportation choices.

Administration

- 23. SGP - Make development decisions predictable, fair and cost-effective.
- 24. SGP - Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration.
- 25. SGP - Strengthen regional cooperation.

1.6 Community Participation

In an effort to foster input and identify goals and objectives of community members, applicants, and the County, a series of meetings and workshops were conducted in Shandon. These meetings helped in the development of community design and planning principles, land use and circulation plans, streetscape improvement plans, development standards, and implementation programs. Property owners, planning professionals, engineers, elected officials, and the general public participated and provided input during these workshops. The County of San Luis Obispo and its planning and engineering consultants developed land use alternatives derived from the workshops and meetings. These alternatives were further refined and modified during a progression of public meetings held together with Shandon Advisory Council (SAC) meetings. In addition, the community developed through previous efforts a set of Community Priorities that have been included, where feasible, throughout the Community Plan. The complete list of priorities, as supported by the Shandon Advisory Council, is contained in Appendix A.

Workshop #1

The first workshop, held at Shandon Elementary School, provided an opportunity for residents, project applicants and County staff to interact and collectively develop land use alternatives for the Shandon Community Plan. The workshop agenda included community participation exercises to express thoughts and desires for the community. The general theme that was echoed consistently by the participants in the workshop was that there are needs for public safety services, infrastructure improvements, and overall beautification. Comments included the desire to focus on pedestrian walkability and to achieve a mix of uses that would make use of underutilized parcels. The facilitated workshop assembled valuable information which later defined the character of the three land use alternatives that were presented at the second workshop.

Workshop participants identified their favorite recreational and community amenities. The results are as follows:

Top Five Recreational Amenities

- Walking Trails
- Community Center
- Bike Trails
- Skate Park
- Bandstand

Top Five Community Amenities

- Gas Station
- Sheriff Sub-station
- Health Center
- Coffee Shop
- Bar/tavern (Participants were also asked to vote for their least favorite item. Bar/Tavern also received a significant number of votes for least favorite.)

Workshop # 2

The focus of the second workshop, held at Shandon High School, was built around the presentation of the Community Plan Alternatives. All of the charrettes, workshops, and meetings up to this point were planned to gather information from the three major applicants or landowners (one of those applicants subsequently withdrew from the planning process), community members, and County representatives in order to develop a comprehensive vision. The workshop meeting agenda included a quick summary of the questionnaire results, the outcomes of the exercises from Workshop #1, and a Visual Preference Survey (an idea-sharing segment to determine community preferences regarding building types and character).

1.7 Authority

Content, adoption and subsequent amendment of a community plan are governed by California Government and Public Resources Codes. A community plan is adopted as a general plan amendment and may only be amended four times per calendar year, per Section (§) 65358 of the California Government Code.

Section 21083.3 of the California Public Resources Code requires a community plan to include or provide reference to each of the seven mandatory elements (Land Use, Circulation, Housing Noise, Conservation, Open Space and Safety) of a general plan specified in §65302 of the California Government Code. A community plan need not address all the issues specified in §65302, if the overall general plan, in this case, the San Luis Obispo County General Plan, satisfies these requirements. A community plan, however, must contain specific development policies and identify measures to implement those policies.

Community plans should be updated periodically to conform to changes in California law and other legal requirements, and to reflect changes in local population, land development patterns, and public sentiment. In addition, the conditions and assumptions that form the basis of a community plan may change due to fluctuations in population, the economy, development in the surrounding region, and other factors. The 2011 update of the Shandon Community Plan is the first significant amendment to the Shandon-Carrizo Area Plan and the Shandon URL since their original adoption in 1980.

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